

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAB-01 IO-14 OMB-01 NIC-01

ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 /155 W
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P R 121129Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5383

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1176

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, IZ, IR

SUBJ: IRAQI-IRANIAN BORDER CLASH

REF: TEHRAN 1159

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: PRESS FRONT PAGED IRAN-IRAQ BORDER CLASH FEBRUARY 11 (REFTEL), REPORTING SOME HEAVY MILITARY EQUIPMENT BROUGHT INTO PLAY AND CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES. IRAN IS SENDING STIFF NOTE OF PROTEST TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT. BORDER REPORTED AS "CALM" WITH SCATTERED SHOOTING. END SUMMARY

1. PRESS FRONT PAGED IRAN-IRAQ BORDER CLASH (REFTEL) WITH HEAD-CONFIDENTIAL

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LINES "41 IRANIANS DIE IN BITTEREST BORDER CLASH - IRAQIS

TURN TAIL LEAVING THEIR DEAD BEHIND" (KAHYAN). NEWSPAPERS REPORT 41 IRANIAN BORDER GUARDS KILLED AND 81 WOUNDED IN REPELLING AN ATTACK BY IRAQI INVADERS WHO FLED, LEAVING BEHIND 14 DEAD. CLASH TERMED AS BIGGEST IN RECENT SERIES. BORDER AREA AS OF NIGHT FEBRUARY 11 WAS REPORTED AS "CALM" WITH SCATTERED SHOOTING.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS, A GOI ARMY "COMMUNIQUE" STATED:

(A) DESPITE PREVIOUS WARNINGS OF IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, IRAQI FORCES, SUPPORTED BY ARTILLERY, MOUNTED A TANK AND INFANTRY ATTACK FEBRUARY 11 ON THE MEHRAN VILLAGE OF REZA ABAD;

(B) ARTILLERY FIRE WAS ALSO DIRECTED ON THE KONHANCHAM DAM; AND

(C) IRANIAN FRONTIER GUARDS (GENDARMARIE) REPULSED THE ATTACK, AND RETREATING IRAQI FORCES LEFT BEHIND 14 DEAD, WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION.

3. PRESS, NOTING BORDER CLASHES OCCURRING LAST DECEMBER 24 AND FEBRUARY 3-4, STATED GOI SENDING "STIFF" PROTEST NOTE TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND "WARNED OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES IF SUCH HOSTILE ACTS CONTINUED".

4. TEHRAN JOURNAL REPORTED AN MFA SOURCE STATING HE DEEPLY SORRY TO SEE THAT BAGHDAD'S WORDS DID NOT MATCH ITS ACTION. IRAQI AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JUMA WAS REPORTEDLY NOT AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT, AND PRESS NOTED ON HIS ARRIVAL TEHRAN (TEHRAN 942), HE HAD EXPRESSED OPTIMISM OVER FUTURE IRAN-IRAQI RELATIONS.

5. SEMI-OFFICIAL KAYHAN, IN EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 12, STATES LATEST BORDER VIOLATIONS BY IRAQI MILITARY HAS ASSUMED DANGEROUS DIMENSIONS. BAGHDAD'S REGIME'S FRUSTRATIONS AT HOME, EDITORIAL SAYS, AND ITS POOR PERFORMANCE IN INTER-ARAB POLITICS CANNOT BE COVERED BY MURDEROUS ACTS AGAINST ISOLATED IRANIAN OUTPOST. CONSIDERS IT ONLY FAIR THAT IRAN EXPECT OTHER ARAB STATES TO UNDERSTAND ROOT OF IRAQI REGIME'S TROUBLES AND SEE MILITARY RAIDS IN THIS LIGHT. EXPOUNDS, OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES MUST SHOW MATURITY AND NOT FALL VICTIM TO BLACKMAIL BY IRAQI REGIME. EXPRESSES ASTONISHMENT THERE NO PROTEST BY REPRESENTATIVES OF RESPONSIBLE ARAB COUNTRIES, AND ASKS HOW CAN ARAB COUNTRIES

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EXPECT IRAN'S SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE AND YET FAIL TO SHOW GOOD WILL. END UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMENT: THE LATEST BORDER CLASH IS THE LARGEST AND MOST SEVERE WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN SOME TIME. AN IRANIAN AIR FORCE COPILOT INFORMED AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY

BEEN ON A STRAFING MISSION AGAINST IRAQI FORCES. WE HAVE AS
YET NO OTHER INFORMATION WHICH WOULD CONFIRM THIS. AS OF NOW,
IT APPEARS THE SITUATION HAS QUIETED DOWN. OBVIOUSLY IRAN-
IRAQ RELATIONS HAVE MARKEDLY DETERIORATED AND IT REMAINS TO BE
SEEN WHETHER IRAQI AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JUMA WILL BE ABLE TO
PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS UPON THE RETURN THIS EVENING OF THE
SHAH, WHO HAS BEEN VACATIONING IN SWITZERLAND. END CONFIDENTIAL
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